

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

PO BOX 202801
HELENA MT 59620-2801
www.sos.mt.gov
(406) 444-2034
(406) 444-4249 (FAX)
(406) 444-9068 (TTY)

Linda McCulloch
Secretary of State

EXHIBIT 2
DATE 3-10-2009
SB SB 367

SB367 Electronic Absentee Voting for Military
House State Administration, RM 455
March 10, 2009 @ 9 AM
Secretary Linda McCulloch's Remarks

Good morning Mr. Chair, members of the Committee.
For the record, I'm Montana Secretary of State Linda McCulloch.

I would like to thank Senator Hamlett for bringing this bill forward, as it will expand and secure access to Montana's electoral process for those serving overseas.

Montana is one of only 19 states that currently allows absent military voters to receive a ballot electronically, and to submit the voted ballot electronically. Montana, along with Florida, Kansas and New Mexico was recently recognized as the only states that meet all of the military and overseas voting initiatives recommended by the Federal Voting Assistance Program to assist military voters.

This critical service ensures that more Montanans can cast their vote and have their vote counted.

Montana Clerks and Records and Election Administrators work diligently to make voting work for military and overseas voters, and they consistently go the extra mile to ensure each voter receives a ballot in time for it to be returned and counted.

Without the electronic provision already in Montana law, this effort would not be possible.

One of the things I like most about this bill is that it will allow military and overseas electors to late-register.

Under current law absent military and overseas electors must register at least 30 days before the election, unless they are registering and voting the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot.

I think the current provision unfairly disenfranchises military and overseas electors.

As the state's chief elections official I support late registration for all voters—including this category of dedicated citizens.

Before closing, I would like to draw your attention to the important amendments in this bill.

Section 1, line 2e, incorporates the current process for ensuring the accuracy, integrity and secrecy of the electronic voting process.

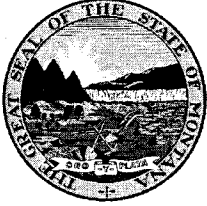
Section 3, line 2, ensures the transmitted electronic ballots will be counted with the provisional ballots the Monday following the election.

Section 5 authorizes an important study that will identify, investigate and hopefully resolve any challenges associated with the act.

And Section 6 allows for an effective date of July 1, 2012, which gives counties more time to adequately prepare to implement the service before the next presidential election.

This bill makes voting uncomplicated and accessible to a greater number of Montanans while securing the privacy of our overseas and absent military voters.

It is a good bill and I urge a "do-pass."
Thank you for your time.



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